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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP AND NEA/NGA

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TAGS: [PREL](#), [I2](#), [KU](#)

SUBJECT: GCC PREPARES FOR HOSTILITIES

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones, reasons: 1.5 (b) and (d)

1. (S) Summary: Minstate for Foreign Affairs Shaykh Dr. Mohammed al-Sabah gave the Ambassador a readout on this week's GCC Summit during a December 25th meeting. While billed as an opportunity to discuss internal GCC issues, including the conclusion of a much-publicized customs agreement, Dr. Mohammed said discussion at the conference focused on Iraq, and that all participants were in agreement that the Iraqi regime was &very dangerous,8 would not last, and that military conflict in the near future was inevitable. In addition to concluding a unanimous resolution condemning Saddam's December 7 speech, the participants also agreed to hold two &secret8 meetings within the next two weeks: one to discuss the coordination of security efforts among member states and another to discuss GCC involvement in a post-Saddam Iraq. End Summary.

GCC on Iraq

2. (S) According to Dr. Mohammed, Saddam Hussein's December speech had galvanized opposition to Saddam amongst the ranks of GCC member states, and there was a realization among the GCC that the speech should be denounced. To this end, he said, the participants in the summit allowed the Kuwaiti delegation to draft a resolution denouncing Saddam's speech, which was adopted without &a single dot changed.8 The resolution was toughly worded, and included language condemning the speech's incitement against the Kuwaiti government and support for terrorist acts in the country.

3. (S) Dr. Mohammed said all parties were in unanimous agreement on a number of points regarding the Iraqi situation: that Saddam's regime poses a distinct danger to the region; that it is highly unlikely that there will not be military conflict and that in fact such conflict is imminent; and that one way or another Saddam's regime &is gone. It cannot survive, and we must think of a post-Saddam Iraq.8

What now?

4. (S) Responding to the Ambassador's question about whether or not there had been substantive discussion about a post-Saddam Iraq, Dr. Mohammed revealed that the GCC had agreed to hold two &secret, unpublicized8 meetings on the Iraq situation within the next two weeks.

5. (S) Realizing that the &transition period8 between a Saddam-led Iraq and a future government there may be dangerous, Dr. Mohammed said the GCC had agreed to hold a meeting of the head of the various GCC state security agencies to exchange information and coordinate security efforts.

6. (S) In addition, the GCC had adopted by-laws for a new Joint Defense Committee, whose members will include GCC Foreign and Defense Ministers. It will meet in Saudi Arabia for the first time in the coming few weeks. The meeting will focus on the future of Iraq, including discussion of likely candidate(s) for leadership in a post-Saddam Iraq.

7. (S) Comment: Dr. Mohammed could not have been clearer about GCC states' desire to be rid of Saddam once and for all. This, coupled with their belief that a confrontation is unavoidable anyway, has spurred them into action to prepare for the inevitable. While this should facilitate somewhat approval for U.S. requests for support as we build a coalition and prepare for a possible confrontation, it also means that we should be prepared to share our views with GCC states on a post-Saddam Iraq as soon as possible. Otherwise, they may go off in another direction, which could complicate further cooperation.

JONES